

The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 12 October 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
12 OCTOBER 1968

1. Panama
(As of 5:00 AM
EDT)

Sporadic gunfire is reported in Panama City this morning following the National Guard coup. The Guard moved swiftly last night and now controls key government and radio installations. Arias, however, escaped to the Canal Zone where he has asked for asylum. Members of his Panamenista Party are being arrested.

The Guard's move was triggered by Arias' changes in the command structure. Commandant Vallarino, who was being retired as head of the Guard, was not immediately involved in the coup, and his role is still unclear. The front man at the moment is a Lt. Col. Torrijos who apparently has assumed control of the government. Torrijos is an old enemy of Arias and a ring-leader of opposition to the President.

No trouble has been reported in or along the borders of the Canal Zone.

2. South Vietnam

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3. Berlin

The Soviets are dropping thinly veiled threats that "some unpleasantness" could attend a forthcoming convention of Kiesinger's Christian Democratic Union in West Berlin set for 2 November. Such unpleasantness probably would take the form of East German harassment of access routes into the city.

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4. Spain

The Spanish military is optimistic on base negotiations with the US. 50X1

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The military wants the base agreement renewed because they want American military aid. Their current optimism, however, may be premature.

5. Ghana

Two Soviet fishing trawlers were seized by the Ghanaian Navy Thursday night. The Ghanaians suspect the trawlers were involved in some sort of intelligence activity, possibly landing men and materiel on the beach. 50X1

6. Nigeria

7. Cyprus

There is little progress in the talks between leaders of the Turkish and Greek Cypriot communities. Now in their fourth month, the talks first snagged on the question of Turkish Cypriot local autonomy. That was shelved and now they are hung up on lesser issues. Continuing the dialogue, however, helps to keep things calm.

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8. USS Pueblo

The crew has not lost its sense of humor. Both the Washington Star and the New York Times yesterday carried pictures of crewmen giving the middle finger to their captors. Then an examination of the long petition broadcast by Pyongyang on Tuesday revealed this paragraph:

"We, as conscientious human beings who were cast upon the rocks and shoals of immorality by the tidal wave of Washington's naughty policies, know that neither the frequency nor the distances of these transgressions into the territorial waters of this sovereign peace-loving nation matter because, in the final analysis, penetration however slight is sufficient to complete the act."

The last line is close to a verbatim quote for the legal definition of rape; "the rocks and shoals" is an obvious reference to the old Navy regulations.



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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of U S
Political Attitudes



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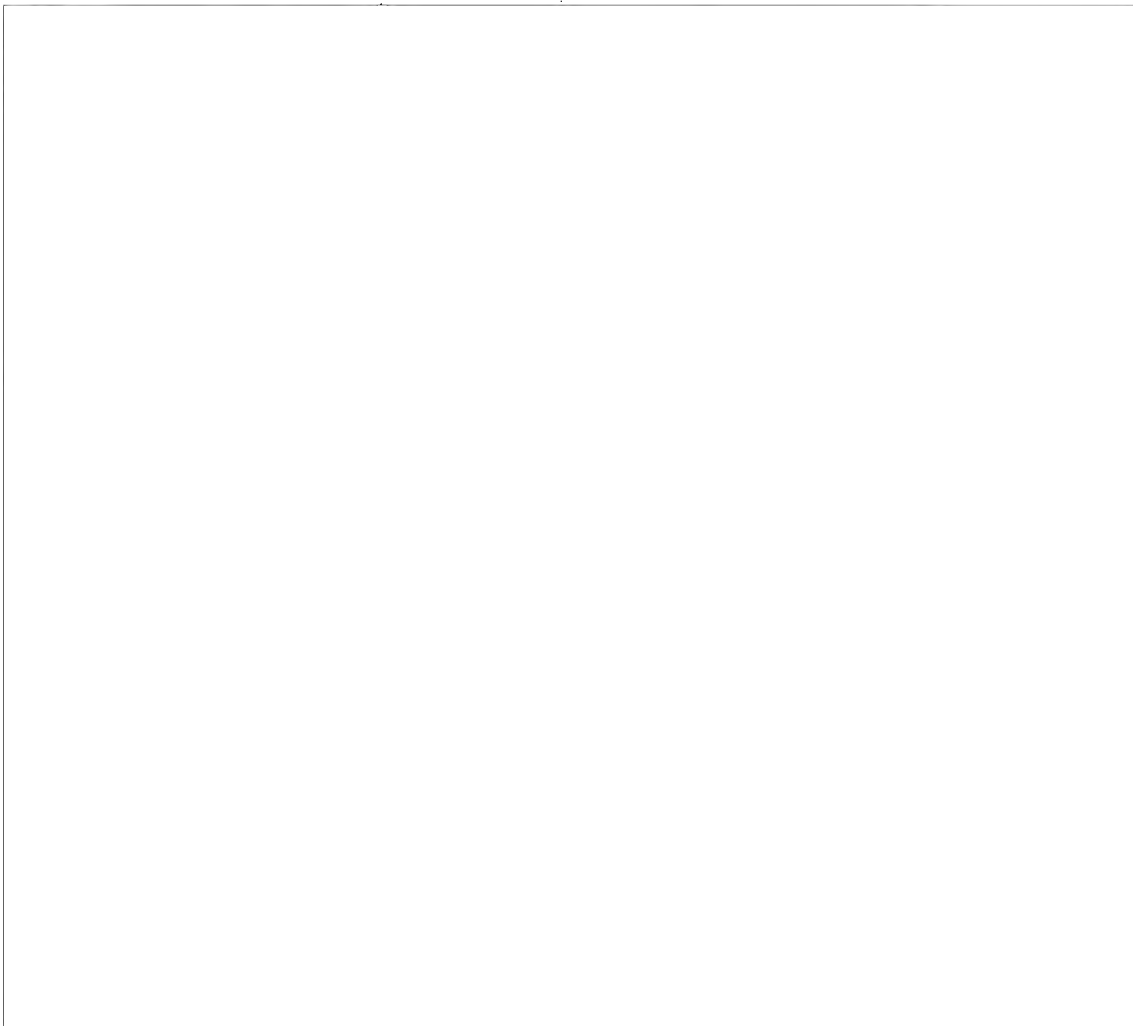
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12 October 1968

Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION



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Front Officials Arrive in Paris: The Liberation Front officials who will officially open the information office in Paris finally arrived on 11 October. According to Western press reports, the Communists had prepared an elaborate reception at the airport, but the two officials were hustled out of the airport through another entrance and were not allowed to make a grand entrance. Hanoi's permanent diplomatic

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representative in Paris, Mai Van Bo, and a prominent member of the North Vietnamese delegation to the peace talks, Ha Van Lau, were at the airport to greet the delegation.

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On Repatriation: North Vietnam's Foreign Ministry has scored the repatriation of Vietnamese from northeast Thailand to South Vietnam.

In a statement broadcast on 9 October, the ministry charged this program violated agreements between the North Vietnamese and Thai Red Cross organizations as well as international law. The statement indicated the Vietnamese were being forced to repatriate and said the Thai Government will "bear full responsibility for all consequences" unless the program is halted.

The Vietnamese involved in this repatriation from Thailand's troubled northeast are generally sympathetic to Hanoi and have been unwilling to voluntarily submit to the move.

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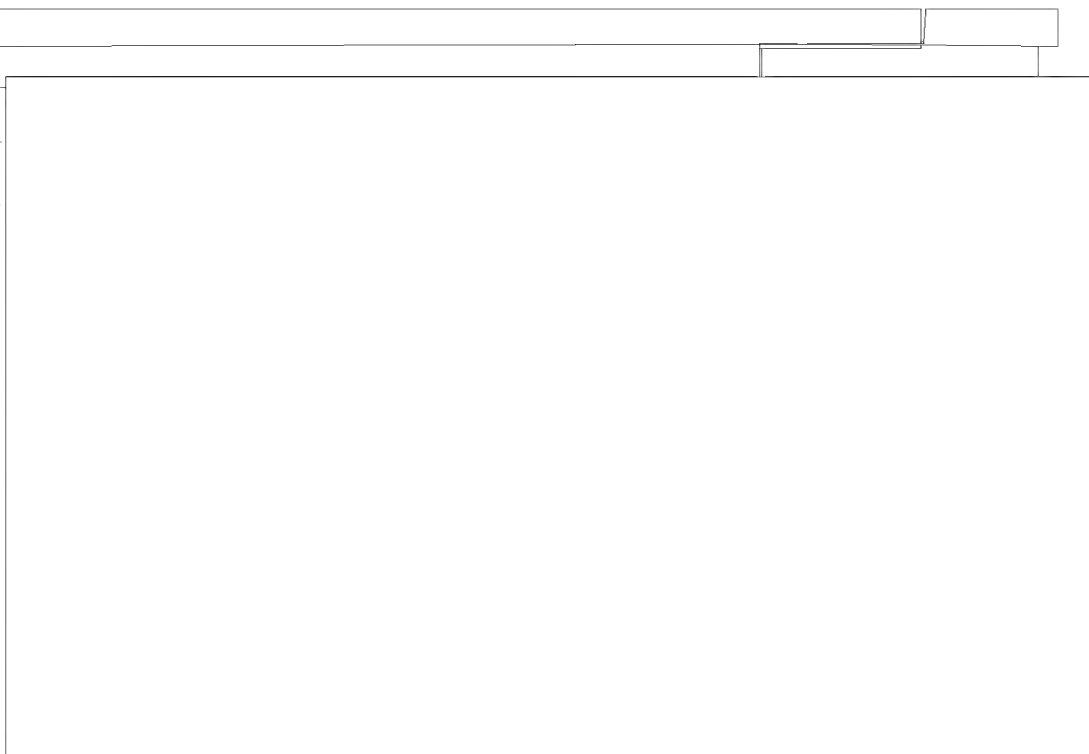
Radio Reports Saigon Rumors: Hanoi Radio reported the coup rumors in Saigon in a brief broadcast on its international service yesterday. It was sourced largely to Western press accounts and concluded that the coup rumors were probably a ploy by President Thieu to replace more of the Ky men still in the cabinet.

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

Hanoi Radio Notes Baltimore Rally: Hanoi Radio, in its international service, has publicized an anti-war rally held in Baltimore on 7 October. The broadcast on 11 October claimed that more than 2,000 people gathered in front of the court house in support of nine young Americans on trial for burning draft cards.

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